

## **12th Working Session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, April 2022**

### **Submission on Contribution of older persons to sustainable development**

#### **National Legal and Policy Framework**

- 1 a. Chapter II, Article 3 of the Constitution of Mauritius (1968) includes, inter alia, the following fundamental rights and freedoms of individual:
  - The right to life, liberty, security
  - Freedom of conscience, of expression, of assembly and association and freedom to establish schools
  - The right to protection for the privacy of his home and other property and from deprivation of property without compensation
- b. The Equal Opportunities Act of 2008 prohibits discrimination based on age, caste, colour race, political opinion, provision of goods and services, participation in activities of associations and clubs.
- c. The Senior Citizens Council established in 1985 makes provision for the 'enhancement of the engagement' of older men and women in community, political and cultural life.

In respect of above provisions, older persons have a large window of opportunities, either when they are still in employment or retired to contribute to sustainable development.

A few examples: retired medical doctors and nursing officers many of whom front liners during the COVIS-19 pandemic, retired administrators and managers, retired teachers, retired engineers, and agricultural workers often get into self-employment.

2. The challenges faced by older persons for the realization of their right to contribute to sustainable development at national and international levels?
  - Poverty for those, though with experience, do not feel sufficiently recognized and compensated
  - Gender inequality whereby in some areas like Security services men are favoured.

- Health: the prevalence of diabetes according to Non-Communicable Disease Department of the Ministry of Health (2015) 20.5 % of the adult population of 25-74 or 257,442 out of a total population of 1.2m.
- Housing: a retired person or an older person for that matter who is still not an owner of his house is not motivated to find himself in an ecosystem model where the institutions and policy makers are looking for solutions to create sustainable cities.
- The practice of decent work for a decent pay is not respected
- Non-respect of conditions of work, non-provisions of uniforms, no transport, absence of physical security and uncertainty about insurance for wounds.
- Inability for an older person to adapt to the simple technology of reading and operating a computer.
- Ageism, bias and pressure from younger people to get employed
- Except for a handful of known retired international experts there is no list of older persons known to work on the international stage.

### 3.

a. Recent publication of research by the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council (NPCC) entitled: Ageing Workforce, Challenges and Opportunities for the Republic of Mauritius, Working Paper1 February 2020.

Table below shows employment of older people from 2000 to 2011

**Table 11: Employed population 60 years of age and over by employment status and sex**

Census Year	Country, Island, Age (in years) and Sex	Total	Employment status							
			Self-employed		Employee			Unpaid family worker	Member of producers' co-op	Other & not stated
			With employees	Without employees	Paid by the month	Paid by day, week, fortnight, job	Apprentice			
2000	Both sexes	11 232	1625	3716	4051	1458	3	286	14	79
	Male	7947	1419	3104	2493	775	2	111	10	33
	Female	3285	206	612	1558	683	1	175	4	46
2011	Both sexes	21 661	2188	6049	10261	2482	7	550	17	107
	Male	15277	1824	4617	7315	1296	3	149	10	63
	Female	6384	364	1432	2946	1186	4	401	7	44

Source: Statistics Mauritius

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It stands to reason that as recognized by Government there are many senior citizens who, despite, having reached 60 years or more are still continuing to contribute to the socio-economic development of the country in various sectors. (Government Information Service, 11 October 2018)

#### **4. Equality and non-discrimination**

Dis-Moi carries out awareness programmes in the media, radio, TV.

Further we carry training of students, younger adults and older persons on the issue of ageism.

Authorities and other NGOs conduct similar programmes.

#### **5. Remedies and Redress**

a. to inscribe Socio-economic rights in the Constitution of Mauritius so as to guarantee equal rights to all and giving the means for lodging complaints to citizens who feel their rights are denied.

b. to create an Office of Ombudsperson for older persons to, inter alia, hear grievances, enquire in alleged cases of abuse, maltreatment, and make recommendations for redress

c. In the meantime any person who feels aggrieved can appeal

- to the Equal Opportunities Commission created by an Act of Parliament in 2008, prohibiting discrimination on account of, inter alia, age, sex and sexual orientation in various spheres of activity, namely employment.

- the Police to seek a judge's order for protection

- the National Human Rights Commission.

c. Most importantly, there should be put in place a special Court to hear grievances and render justice to older persons who would receive legal aid on a pro-bono basis.